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## ICT innovations from Finland, and Finnish digilect in electronic media culture

Communication by electronic means has had a predominant place in Finland at least since the mid 1990s. This is the country of Nokia, a pioneer in the field of mobile phones and advanced telecoms technology, as well as a homeland of IRC and Linux, or many computer games like Angry Birds, etc. In short, in this information and new media age, Finland has had many achievements in the ICT field, and has an advanced information society.

In fact, just after World War II, Finland took a path of vigorous progress in almost every field of social life. In 1987, i.e. still before the period of the high technology development, David Arter wrote:

The pace of economic modernisation in post-war Finland has been unique. In no other European democracy has the progression from an essentially agrarian society through a period of accelerated industrialisation to a predominantly service economy been compressed into a mere four decades. (Arter 1987: 227)

The Finnish miracle took place despite the war devastation of the country (especially in the North) and substantial war reparations paid to the Soviet Union. In the beginning, the economic situation was desperate with no international help at hand, the people even faced starvation. Moreover, the Soviet Union was against Finland's participation in Marshall Plan (Rajaniemi 1999: 336–337). Eventually, USA, Sweden, Norway and other countries (e.g. Brazil, Argentina, Colombia) supported Finland with grants and loans (see *ibidem*:

333), which not only helped to feed and dress the people, but also allowed the country to develop industry (including energy) and agriculture. In addition, Finland's wood was "a gold mine" for the country because Europe, devastated by the war, needed wood and paper products more than anything in the post-war reconstruction efforts. Thanks to this, poverty-stricken Finland saw a successful recovery.

At the same time, there is no doubt that the famous Finnish *sísu* (inner strength) of the hard-working Finns played a huge role in their determination to rebuild their country. Moreover, soon after the difficult post-war years, in 1952, Finland made another effort to host the Summer Olympic Games in Helsinki, which involved building a considerable infrastructure for it.<sup>1</sup>

It is also worth mentioning that since the war, the Finnish society has lived in relative peace and tranquillity (when compared to generally unstable Europe during the Cold War), as the politics in Finland was conducted with tact and diplomacy, especially when dealing with the potentially dangerous neighbour across the eastern border. This was possible mostly thanks to the "active neutrality" (which led to the "Finlandization") and the "sauna diplomacy" of the famous and long-standing president Urho K. Kekkonen (1956–1982), not forgetting his predecessor Juho Kusti Paasikivi (1946–1956) and his successor Mauno Koivisto (1982–1994), after whom others adopted similar tactics: Martti Ahtisaari, Tarja Halonen and Sauli Niinistö. In other words, the state leaders watched not only over the national security, but also the steady and sustainable development of the society in the democracy of the Western type.

In such a short period, this country made fast progress and changed its character from a poor agricultural type into a modern high-tech model and is an outstanding example of the combination: welfare state + information society. M. Castells and P. Himanen (2002), describing Finland in these terms, made the Finnish model very famous and worthy of admiration by the whole world. Also, the intrinsic and practical ingenuity of Finns developed many economic, technological and social inventions (cf. e.g. Taipale 2014).

Here we will focus on electronic communication in particular and what input the Finns have had in its development. And finally, we will take a look at the Finnish means used in the language of such a communication.

### **Contribution to develop mobile telephony and Nokia achievements**

The first commercial mobile phone network in Finland was ARP (*Auto-radiopuhelin* 'car radio phone') which began its service in 1971, soon becoming very popular among the country's inhabitants. It offered analogue mobile

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<sup>1</sup> The year 1952 was also the last to pay war reparations.

radio phones in pre-cellular technology, i.e. of “zero-generation” type. However after one decade, this system was gradually replaced by a more modern mobile phone network built between the Nordic countries in 1981, i.e. *Nordic Mobile Telephone* (NMT). It offered a system of the “first generation” phones still remaining in analogue technology.

Later on, digital mobile networks were born. The setting-up of GSM<sup>2</sup> was a common European concept, worked on by engineers of different countries since 1982. The pivotal year was 1987 when important technical specifications were concluded and the political green light was given to the project of the common European mobile telephony system. Then the representatives of mobile radio operators across Europe set up the standards of the common digital cellular radio system to become a complete telecommunications network. In this undertaking, GSM also “took the ideas developed for the NMT network and significantly extended them to support handover between exchanges and information security”<sup>3</sup> (cf. also Hillebrand 2001).

Finland played a role in opening up mobile services in this development:

July 1, 1991 – Finnish Prime Minister Harri Holkeri made the world’s first GSM call over a privately operated network to the Mayor Kaarina Suonio in Tampere. The Prime Minister used Nokia gear on GSM’s original 900MHz band. (Merritt 2012: 122)

Thus the first GSM-network of the second generation, i.e. the first modern digital cellular technology network was opened in Finland in 1991 (Safko 2010: 396): *Radiolinja*<sup>4</sup> (belonging to *Helsingin Puhelin*, now *Elisa*). The same year, the first 300 SIM<sup>5</sup> cards in the world, created by Munich smart-card maker Giesecke & Devrient, were sold to this operator, and soon after, GSM-phones became more popular than NMT ones.

Nokia, an international ICT and electronics company, was born in 1966 (cf. e.g. Facta 2004) by fusion of three smaller companies from Nokia town in Finland: *Nokia Oy* (est. 1871), *Suomen Kumitehdas Oy* (rubber works) and *Suomen Kaapelitehdas Oy* (producing cables). The beginnings of the first one date back to 1865, when factories producing wood pulp were established. The new Nokia corporation continued the production of wood pulp, tyres, ropes, cables, pipes, galoshes, wellington boots, etc., but at the same time it developed its electronics division. Later on, these production lines split into different enterprises, and in the 1970s–1990s, the main line of production

<sup>2</sup> I.e. *Global System for Mobile Communication* (originally Fr. *Groupe Spécial Mobile*).

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.gsmhistory.com/who\\_created-gsm/](http://www.gsmhistory.com/who_created-gsm/) (access 08.10.2017).

<sup>4</sup> Its slogan in advertising campaign was very meaningful: *Jotta Suomalaiset voisivat puhua enemmän* ‘So that Finns could talk more’.

<sup>5</sup> SIM = subscriber identity module.

and research became electronic engineering, computing and telecommunication technology, manufacturing not only mobile phones (at first for NMT network, later for GSM), but other multimedia (hi-fi equipment, computers etc.) and satellite appliances. Moreover, Nokia even produced worldwide devices, and developed mobile communication networks outside Europe, e.g. it supplied the first network in Asia, launched in Thailand in 1994 (Huurde-  
man 2003: 530).

In 1979, Nokia and Salora (Finnish electronics company) merged and established Mobira, which developed mainly mobile phones. Finally in 1989, Mobira became Nokia Mobile Phones. The first GSM phone by Nokia went on sale in 1992: it was Nokia 1011. The domination of the Nokia began at that time. In the 2000s, Finland was called “Nokialand”, as it was the biggest firm of the country, and its influential position became even a national case with its positive and negative consequences on which many publications were written (e.g. Häikiö 2002, Leinbach & Brunn 2002, Lindholm et al. 2003, Merriden 2001, Pantzar & Ainamo 2001, Steinbock 2001, etc.).

Still in 2006, Pia Maria Ahlbäck shows Nokia as a symbol of modern Finnish identity and an incarnation of the Finnish historical Leitmotif “modern communication technology” which has “its iconic status at the center of the discourse of Finnish nationalism” (2006: 73). And she writes interestingly:

The history of Nokia runs parallel to that of Finland. Much older than independent Finland, Nokia is the oldest as well as the biggest company in Finland. And Nokia is today one of the most valuable brands in the world. To paraphrase its own slogan, Nokia “connects people” around the globe. In so doing, however, Nokia paradoxically reaffirms Finnish national space by promoting a mobility that transcends national borders. From its beginning in the late nineteenth century, the story Nokia is about building national affluence by firmly grounding Finland in the West. (Ahlbäck 2006: 73)

And later on, she adds: “In Finland, all of these technological practices seemed to be invested with nationalism” (Ahlbäck 2006: 79). Indeed, Nokia could be an emanation of conception of a new ideal Finland. No doubt that the aim of the Finnish government’s strategy was to combine technological innovations and the socio-economic development. It was also the first country to create a Science and Technology Policy Council<sup>6</sup> led by the Prime Minister. In fact since the 1980s Finland has become a leading country in technological innovations, and Nokia became its “avatar”. However the fierce competition, especially Apple’s introduction of an iPhone in 2007, pushed Nokia out of its leading position in the telecommunications market and caused serious financial implications. Finally, in 2014 Nokia, not being able to recover from the

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<sup>6</sup> Founded in 1963 as Science Policy Council, renamed in 1987.

financial loss and regain its dominant place, sold the mobile phone business to Microsoft. At present, Nokia as a brand still exists and continues to develop its technology.

Here are examples of the world's first achievements of Nokia:

- in 1991: the first GSM call using Nokia equipment,
  - in 1992: the first model (Nokia 1011) to send and receive SMS messages,
- but in 1994 the Nokia 2010 enabled to text easily,
- in 1997, the first videogame on a phone (Nokia 6110) as factory-installed software: *Snake* became “the most popular mobile video game on the planet” (Safko 2010: 405)
  - in 1999: the first coloured removable covers in the phone Nokia 8210,
  - in 1999: the first media phone (Nokia 7110): mobile phone + minicomputer with WiFi Internet access + media technologies,
  - in 2000: the most iconic Nokia's model: Nokia 3310, famous for its toughness and durability. In 2017, Nokia launched its modernised model.
  - in 2006, smartphone Nokia N73, called the first “multimedia computer”.

### Input to invent SMS

Originally the aim of the mobile phone networks was to transmit voice calls, but with time the idea to transmit text messages was born, just as pagers (i.e. one-way message receivers) were widely used in the 1980s.

One can say that the SMS is an indirect Finnish invention: an idea of transmitting text messages between mobile phones was pitched in... a pizzeria during a meeting of three Finns: Matti Makkonen, Juhani Tapiola and Seppo Tiainen in Copenhagen in 1982, where they attended a telecoms conference (cf. Juurus 2002, Hintikka 2009, Makkonen 2014). They even came up with a Finnish name for this possible system: *tekstinäpelin* (Makkonen 2014: 296).

However this informal conversation could not be called an invention of SMS. Indeed, Friedhelm Hillebrand, one of the leading figures of the Technical Committee in GSM, states that the idea of transmitting messages in early 1980s was not new (cf. Morse telegraphy since before 1900, Telex in the 1970s, mobile text and data networks in the late 1970s and early 1980s), and hence he insists this is not a Finnish “innovation”: he states that the source of the rumours was only an article in *Helsingin Sanomat* in 2002,<sup>7</sup> which reported the Finns' discussion in the pizzeria as a milestone in the history of SMS creation, but this “general idea had not been further elaborated by methods, techniques, configurations, etc. They had neither documented their idea nor provided contributions to standardisation” (Hillebrand 2010: 18). Later on,

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<sup>7</sup> Probably it is about the article of Kati Juurus (2002).

between mid-1984 and February 1985, a Franco-German group considered practically such a system of messages within the organisation GSM, and the project was worked on and finalised by an inter-national, European team.

Also the claims of sending the first SMS were made by different persons and institutions. Yet most probably the first commercial SMS was sent on December 3, 1992, when a British engineer Neil Papworth at Sema (a British technology company) sent a text message from his personal computer with a slightly premature greeting “Merry Christmas” to the phone of Richard Jarvis, the director of GSM operator Vodafone (Safko 2010: 399). The recipient could not answer, because his Orbitel 901 handset had no keyboard. However this first text message can be called “first commercial text message”, as Vodafone offered such a text messaging service with a brand name *Tele-Notes* service for the business world.

The following year, in 1993 the first SMS typed on a GSM phone to another phone was sent on a Nokia handset by Riku Pihkonen, a Finnish engineering student at Nokia company (cf. Agar 2003). And finally Nokia 2110 released in 1994, was the first mobile phone to enable writing messages easily.

Soon, SMS services began: the Finnish GSM operator Radiolinja introduced the first paid downloadable ringtone in 1998, and the first mobile news service by SMS in 2000, and later on: video games, jokes, horoscopes, TV content, advertising, etc. (Safko 2010: 400).

Even if Makkonen is not the “father” of SMS, it is difficult to point out a single inventor as many contributed to this innovation even before the final GSM system was set in stone. Nevertheless, Makkonen (2014: 297) states:

As a social innovation, text messaging may be legitimately called Finnish. In the mid-1990s, when SMS was widely available for mobile phone users, Finland was the leading country in offering mobile services. In Christmas 1996 the operators’ network collapsed under the weight of so many people sending their Christmas greetings by SMS, and the same thing happened later elsewhere.<sup>8</sup>

Indeed, Simon Lindgren (2017: 202) confirms:

Text messaging was first widely taken up in the Nordic countries, and especially Finland – ‘Nokialand’ (...). Today, rather than a subcultural phenomenon, texting is an extremely widespread phenomenon which is solidly embedded in the everyday lives of large numbers of people world-wide. People tend to like texting as it is unobtrusive and can be done silently in all sorts of situations.

It is clear that a mobile phone was adopted by Finns much faster than in other countries and the SMS communication gained a huge popularity in

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<sup>8</sup> On 6.12.2017, every Finnish mobile phone number received a gratulatory SMS: *Suomi100. Itsenäinen Suomi täyttää tänään 100 vuotta. Onnea Suomi ja suomalaiset! Det självständiga Finland fyller 100 år idag. Grattis Finland och finländare!* The operators’ networks withstood.

Finland. This may be due to their reticent nature: e.g. in an SMS one can express something that could be difficult to say face to face otherwise. Furthermore, it is interesting to note, that during the last decade, text messages shook the Finnish public opinion with rather humorous “SMS scandals”, when private text messages sent by some politicians were revealed in the media, and particularly the afternoon tabloids created exaggerated sensations and caused tension (Kantola & Vesa 2013: 303).

The first significant incident took place in 2006, when the then Prime Minister in a concise SMS announced the end of the relationship with his “bride-to-be”. Her revenge was no less shocking when she gave a number of press interviews. She even published a book *Pääministerin morsian* (‘Bride of the Prime Minister’), where she also quoted their text messages. Another similar situation occurred in 2008, when, in a gossip magazine, a woman (dancer and nude model) revealed ca. 200 “suggestive” text messages from the then Foreign Minister, who sent them from his work cell phone.<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately for this Minister, the public scandal led to the loss of his post in the government, which was not the case with the Prime Minister whose popularity had surprisingly increased.<sup>10</sup> Things can go both ways, but “Finns are traditionally very patient with their politicians” (Niveri 2008).

What’s more, the first novel in the form of text messages was written by a Finn. We could call this the birth of SMS literature, and it comes as no surprise to see this birth in a country so familiar with the state-of-the-art technology of electronic communication. This novel *Viimeiset viestit* (‘Last messages’) was published in January 2007. Its author, Hannu Luntiala, was born in 1952 and worked as a civil servant in Population Register Centre before he took up writing (this novel was his first). The story is placed over two months in 2005, just after the tragic tsunami in December 2004 in the Indian Ocean. The book covers human relationships and life in general, but in a slightly melancholic tone (typical for Finns?). The language used in the book is standard Finnish, without abbreviations.

An American journalist, Jennifer Bensko-Ha, who knows Finland well and seems to be an enthusiast of Luntiala’s book, notices a strong imprint of the Finnish culture in this work:

Can a person’s life be reduced to 160-character chunks? The Finns seem to think so. (...) Although text messaging is a worldwide phenomenon, and the theme is universal, the book in many ways is unique to the Finnish experience. Finns are generally very private and respectful of others’ personal space. Text

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<sup>9</sup> And it was not the first of this Minister’s SMS problems with young models, as in 2005 he did the same (see Niveri 2008).

<sup>10</sup> It is interesting to note that this Foreign Minister was a part of that Prime Minister government.

messaging, which is less intrusive than a phone call and quicker than an e-mail, may be the perfect medium for the tech-savvy but reserved Finns. Perhaps only they have the tenacity and patience to text a loved one for two months without succumbing to making a single phone call. (Bensko-Ha 2007 : 85)

Even if the book seems to be typically Finnish in its form, it was quickly translated into a few languages in 2008: Croatian (*Zadnje poruke*), Slovenian (*Zadnja sporočila*), Russian (*Последние сообщения*); and in 2009: Hungarian (*Az utolsó üzenetek*) and Estonian (*Viimased sõnumid*). However, the book was received with little enthusiasm in Finland, cf. Petäjä 2007, Seuri 2007.

### IRC = Internet Relay Chat

IRC, i.e. exchange of text messages in real time by Internet, is another Finnish invention. Its “father” is Jarkko Oikarinen who, in August 1988 at the University of Oulu, first developed the tools for real-time discussion for Oulu Box’s users: he was then a 3<sup>d</sup> year student being a summer trainee, when his instructor Heikki Putkonen made him the administrator of

Oulubox, a BBS system, which was free for anyone to use through a modem or via the university computer network. Discussion could be held with other Oulubox users by leaving messages for others to read, and, as it could be accessed through the university network, it was possible to have scores of simultaneous users. (Oikarinen 2014: 298)

So in the beginning this was a smart project for a local network, but the idea was not so brand new and was influenced by a kind of predecessor: MUT (Multi-User Talk) programme, developed by Jukka Pihl (cf. *ibidem*). Finally the success of IRC invention involved the interest of other Finnish universities and later on,

servers from the University of Denver and Oregon State University were the first non-Finnish servers to join the IRC network, which then spread quickly to every continent. Tens of people were now actively participating in IRC development following Open Source software development. (...) In 1991 ordinary people from e.g. Israel were using IRC to send reports about the first Gulf War to every corner of the globe. (Oikarinen 2014: 299)

Oikarinen (2014: 298) explains that the “IRC network therefore consists of several equal servers. This real distributability and lack of central control is probably the most important technical reason of IRC’s popularity”. See also Casal (2017). Now chat is almost an intrinsic part of life like SMS exchange. Naturally now, the idea of real-time conversation is still evolving, and e.g. WhatsApp, available by Internet connection in new generation mobile phones is a step forward in the improvement of this kind of communication.



## Linux

Linux is called “the most famous open-source Internet programme in the world”, this means that anyone has free access to it and its source code in order to modify and develop it. The idea was invented by a 22-years old Finnish student Linus Torvalds in 1991 for Unix-based operating system for personal computers and shortly afterwards his invention became the biggest competitor for Microsoft. Soon a large community grew around this non-commercial project. Jyrki Kasvi (2014: 292) calls it “a fine example of new network community organisations being enabled by communication technology”. Therefore, Castells & Himanen (2002: 71) say that “the most important innovation about Linux is not technical but social”.

## First national emojis

Emoticons and emojis became an intrinsic part of the electronic communication. In this new “ludenic age” (Combs 2000), they incarnate combination of pictures and playfulness, and their repertory is growing all the time, see e.g. <https://emojipedia.org>). Various guides even prompt how to “speak” emoji (cf. Benenson 2015), and in 2017 *The Emoji Movie* was released in the world.

Finland is the first country in the world to create its own set of country themed emojis. So far this collection contains 63 “tongue-in-cheek emotions”, which are created to “explain some hard-to-describe Finnish emotions, Finnish words and customs”: <https://finland.fi/emoji/> (accessed 8.10.2017)<sup>11</sup>. They are available to download from this page, but can only be used and shared as the unmodified images for non-commercial use.

Here they are:



A trusted friend



Åland islands<sup>12</sup>



Association<sup>13</sup>



Aurora borealis

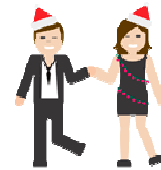
<sup>11</sup> Published on the site “This is Finland” (<https://finland.fi/>) by the Finland Promotion Board, produced by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Department for Communications.

<sup>12</sup> An autonomous archipelago between Finland and Sweden. Their inhabitants speak Swedish.

<sup>13</sup> The Finns love associations. They “have almost five million members (in a nation of 5.4 million)”: <https://finland.fi/emoji/association/> (access in fall 2017).

Baby in a box<sup>14</sup>

Bear

Black gold<sup>15</sup>Christmas party<sup>16</sup>

Cross-country skiing

Cup of coffee<sup>17</sup>Education<sup>18</sup>

Fashionista – Finns



Finnish love



Flag



Forest



Four seasons of bbq

Girl power<sup>19</sup>

Handshake

Happiness<sup>20</sup>Headbanger<sup>21</sup>

<sup>14</sup> All expectant mothers in Finland receive a gift from the government: the maternity package (Fin. *äitiyspakkaus*), which is a box full of children's necessary items. Also usually the box becomes a baby's first bed.

<sup>15</sup> I.e. liquorice, especially salty liquorice (flavoured with ammonium chloride), known in Finland as *salmiakki*.

<sup>16</sup> Traditionally before Christmas holidays, Finns organise *pikkujoulu* (literally 'little Christmas'), which is a small party full of fun, with dances, mulled wine (*glögi*), Christmas dishes.

<sup>17</sup> "Finns are the people with the highest consumption of coffee in the world, at 12 kilos per person per year" – cf. <http://nordiccoffeeculture.com/maxed-out-a-closer-look-at-coffee-consumption-in-finland/>, see also: <https://finland.fi/arts-culture/exploring-the-finnish-affinity-for-coffee/> (access in fall 2017).

<sup>18</sup> The Finnish education system is one of the best in the world thanks to some key reforms 40 years ago, cf. e.g. Sahlberg 2011. Let's also note its technological advancement: in 2013 tablet computers started to replace traditional textbooks in Finnish schools.

<sup>19</sup> Finland was the first European country (then part of the Russian Empire) to introduce women's suffrage (the right to vote and to be elected) in the 1907 parliamentary elections.

<sup>20</sup> The Finns and the Swedes are not merely neighbours. "It doesn't matter whether it's about the excellence of their particular welfare societies, the superiority of their respective mobile phone technologies or international rankings in ice-cream consumption, the Finns will



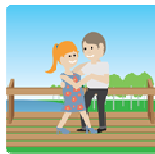
Icebreaker

Iceman<sup>22</sup>Joulutorttu<sup>23</sup>Kaamos<sup>24</sup>

Kalsarikännit f

Kalsarikännit m<sup>25</sup>Karjalanpiirakka<sup>26</sup>

Kicksled

Kokko<sup>27</sup>Lavatanssit<sup>28</sup>Lost hopes f<sup>29</sup>Lost hopes m<sup>30</sup>

always want to beat the Swedes. (...) The Finns never tire of exulting about their victories in the 1995 and 2011 Ice Hockey World Championships, which were particularly sweet due to having beaten Sweden into second place. These were such major events that the nation overcame its reclusiveness and huge crowds formed in city centres” (Moles 2013: 18).

<sup>21</sup> Finland has the most metal bands per capita. Cf. <https://finland.fi/arts-culture/now-trending-globally-finnish-metal-music/> (access in fall 2017). Moreover, many young people like to adopt “metal” dress code (long black coloured hair and black cloths).

<sup>22</sup> The nickname of Kimi Räikkönen.

<sup>23</sup> Fin. ‘Christmas pie/tart’. It’s made with puff pastry and filled with prune jam.

<sup>24</sup> Fin. ‘the polar night, the winter period of darkness north of the Arctic Circle, when there is no sunshine at all’.

<sup>25</sup> Fin. ‘booze-up at home, occasion of getting heavily drunk, usually in underwear’.

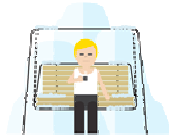
<sup>26</sup> Fin. ‘Karelian rice pie/pasty’. “Of Karelian (eastern Finland) origin, their use spread during World War II. After the Russians took Karelia in 1940, 400,000 Karelian evacuees had to be accommodated all over Finland. Now *piirakkas* are well-known in every Finnish province” (Grönberg-Garcia 1998: 21).

<sup>27</sup> Fin. ‘bonfire’, usually by the water. “The burning of the Midsummer *kokko* (‘bonfire’), originally a tradition linked, in the north and east of the country, with beliefs concerning fertility, cleansing and the banishing of evil spirits, has in the 20th century spread throughout Finland. It has become the central element in the programme of commercial Midsummer festivities, along with music and dance” (Korhonen 1997: 83–84).

<sup>28</sup> Fin. ‘dances on a raised stage/platform (*Java*)’. Finns dance the Finnish tango or *humppa* – a very fast dance derived from German foxtrot since the interwar period (cf. *Facta* 2004).

<sup>29</sup> Usually Finland doesn’t score great successes in the Eurovision Song Contest, cf. <https://finland.fi/emoji/lost-hopes/> (access in fall 2017).

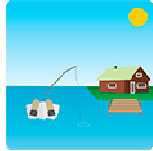
<sup>30</sup> Finally in 2006, the Finnish hard rock/heavy metal band Lordi won the Eurovision Song Contest with the song “Hard Rock Hallelujah”.

Matti Nykänen<sup>31</sup>

Meanwhile in Finland

Moominmamma<sup>32</sup>

Nordic family



Out of office

Peacemaker<sup>33</sup>Perkele<sup>34</sup>Pesäpallo<sup>35</sup>

Polar bear

Pusa hispida saimensis<sup>36</sup>

Reindeer

Sámi<sup>37</sup>

Sauna f



Sauna m

Sauna whisk<sup>38</sup>Sisu<sup>39</sup>

<sup>31</sup> The greatest Finnish ski jumper who competed in the 1980s.

<sup>32</sup> From the series of Moomins, created after the WWII by Tove Jansson (1914–2001, Swedish-speaking Finnish writer. Her books are very popular around the world.

<sup>33</sup> Martti Ahtisaari, born in 1937, former President of Finland (1994–2000), later United Nations diplomat known as an effective mediator in the international conflicts. In 2008 he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

<sup>34</sup> Fin. swearword ‘damn; fuck(ing); bloody’. This was the name of a deity of thunder, later a synonym of devil. Usually, it is pronounced with a long [r], which gives a stronger effect.

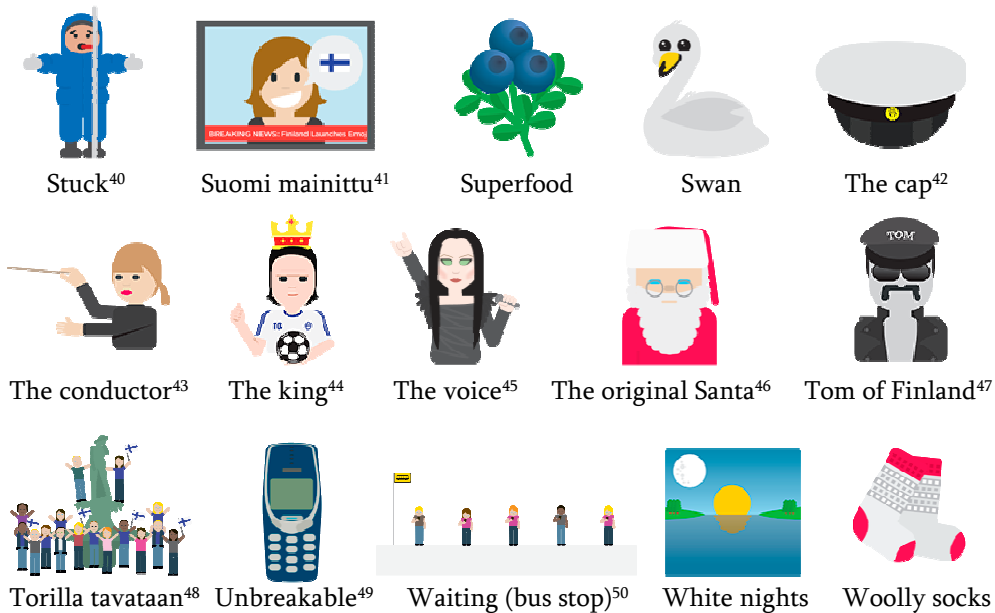
<sup>35</sup> Fin. ‘nest ball’, Finnish baseball, “a modernised, faster version of American baseball” (Sironen 1997: 93), developed by Lauri Pihkala in the 1920s. “With the help of the army and the civil guard, the fast attack game was made known to Finns and spread throughout the country. In it were crystallised the infantry tactics of a newly independent small nation, ‘fire and movement’: accurate grenade-throwing combined with rapid advance on the enemy’s dugout. In the Second World War this was, indeed, of significance in the variable forested terrain in which the battles on the eastern front were fought” (ibidem: 94–95).

<sup>36</sup> A subspecies of ringed seals, which lives only in Lake Saimaa in south-eastern Finland.

<sup>37</sup> Sámi/Sami/Saami – the indigenous people of Finland, known as the Lapps or Laplanders.

<sup>38</sup> In Fin. *saunavihta*, a bunch of birch twigs, which serves as a switch to whip the body in the sauna.

<sup>39</sup> Fin. ‘inner strength’, positive perseverance. “The belief in *sisu* as a peculiarly Finnish phenomenon is not only a common-sense interpretation: it has been wholeheartedly also



supported by certain scholars of Finnishness (...): Finnish *sisu* is inflexible and stiff” (Knuuttila 1997: 292).

<sup>40</sup> Whenever the tongue froze up to a metal piece.

<sup>41</sup> Fin. ‘Finland is mentioned’. “Finns would love to be noticed by other nations” (Moles 2013: 17). Tarja Moles describes it like a kind of obsession (see *ibidem* : 16).

<sup>42</sup> The student cap (Fin. *ylioppilaslakki*). Every Finnish high school graduate has its own and keeps as a souvenir for a lifetime.

<sup>43</sup> Many Finnish conductors achieve(d) great successes in the international arena, e.g. Paavo Berglund, Okko Kamu, Jukka-Pekka Saraste, Esa-Pekka Salonen, etc. However Susanna Mälkki (born in 1969) is the first female Chief Conductor of the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, earlier also in Milan or Los Angeles.

<sup>44</sup> Jari Litmanen (born in 1971), a former Finnish footballer, is considered to be Finland’s greatest player of all time and called *Kuningas* (‘the King’).

<sup>45</sup> Tarja Turunen, former lead vocalist of the Finnish symphonic metal band Nightwish. She has a rich range of her voice.

<sup>46</sup> The real Santa lives in Finland, in Korvatunturi in the north of Finland, but also has his village or rather amusement park in Rovaniemi.

<sup>47</sup> Pseudonym of Touko Valio Laaksonen (1920–1991), controversial but very influential Finnish artist, known for his illustrations of boldly erotic gay culture.

<sup>48</sup> Fin. ‘let’s meet on the square’. Helsinki has two important squares, where people meet: the Market Square (Fin. *Kauppatori*) and Senate Square (Fin. *Senaatintori*). On the emoji above, there is *Havis Amanda* statue at the Market Square.

<sup>49</sup> Nokia 3310, released in 2000, has gained a cult status thanks to its durability.

<sup>50</sup> Let’s notice distances between persons waiting on a bus stop: they avoid invading individual space of each other. See the books of Karoliina Korhonen (2016 & 2017) and her site <http://finnishnightmares.blogspot.com/>: The main character of her comic strips is Matti, a Finn who loves his personal space (there is also an example of the bus stop). Her drawings show fears and special codes of the Finnish society in “uncomfortable” situations in which Finns

Let's hope that in the future, there will be more emojis about the Finnish culture to admire, e.g.: *Kalevala's Sampo*, *Vappu* (with Havis Amanda's washing and picnics in Kaivopuisto in Helsinki), *Runebergin torttu*, *laskiaispulla*, *korvapuusti*, *talkoot*, Finnish tango, Lordi, Leningrad Cowboys, Nordic Walking or Finnish successes in motorsports (Formula 1<sup>51</sup> and WRC rallies<sup>52</sup>), etc.

Finally, as emoticons and emojis usually accompany text messages in electronic communication, and often they are able to modify their tone, we will now take a look at the Finnish mobile phone culture in digital world and at a specific language code in use in electronic communication.

### A look at the Finnish digilect

Electronic communication became very popular in Finland, and with time it developed a kind of messaging culture and its language. Although "in reality there is no uniform teen mobile community or teen mobile communication culture" (Kasesniemi 2003: 62), one can distinguish some characteristic features that have emerged in electronic communication in digital society and mark a new "digital literacy", that became a part of the youth culture. It was born spontaneously, first in English-speaking circle, and later spread in other languages. Now it looks like a code language and shares different names, e.g.:

- in English: *texting*, *txt language*, *SMS lingo*, *SMS code*, *net lingo*, *twingo* (*Twitter lingo*), *Internet acronyms*, *text message jargon*, *txt abbreviations*, *txt initialisms*, *cyberslang*, *textese*, *chatspeak*, *Textspeak* (also *txt-speak* or *txt-spk*), or *Netspeak* (according to a British linguist David Crystal) or *fingered speech* (according to an American linguist John McWhorter),
- in French: *langage SMS*, *langage texto*, *langage tchat(é)*, *écriture électronique*, *écrit(ure) SMS* (term by Rachel Panckhurst & Louis-Amélie Cougnon), *cyberlangue* (Aurélia Dejong's term), *néographie* (Jacques Anis' term),
- in Finnish: *nettipuhe* ('netspeech'), *tekstiviestien kieli* ('language of text messages'<sup>53</sup>), *kännykkäslangi* ('mobile phone slang'), *nettislangi* ('net slang').

However, we think, that the term "digilect" is probably the most suitable and precise as it covers all digital linguistic practices (both in phone and internet communication). We found it in publications of a young Hungarian linguist Ágnes Veszelszki (cf. Veszelszki 2010 and 2017).

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feel awkward. Moreover, it is also worth noticing that every person on the picture looks only at his mobile phone.

<sup>51</sup> Not only Kimi Räikkönen, but also Mika Häkkinen or Valtteri Bottas.

<sup>52</sup> Since the 1980s, e.g. many times world champions: Ari Vatanen, Juha Kankkunen, Tommi Mäkinen, Markus Grönholm, etc.

<sup>53</sup> Fin. *tekstiviesti* is a calque of Eng. *textmessage*. In colloquial language it is called *tekstari*.

This concise type of graphical language (or rather: code) is in use in the electronic media communication: by Internet (instant messaging, ICQ,<sup>54</sup> chat-rooms, e-mails) or cellular telephony (including pagers). The main feature, shared by these electronic devices is the visual display, i.e. screen.

Probably at first, the motivation to modify the language code was the need of text condensation because of the limitation of the message length to 160 characters in a single SMS<sup>55</sup> and to 140 characters in one tweet on Twitter. With time the compression efficiency assumed playful features.<sup>56</sup> The use of digilect depends on the age: younger generations use colloquial language or slang, as well as many “shortcuts”, i.e. abridgements of the forms and contents; while older persons avoid playing with the message form and write in literary language with correct punctuation. There are also differences in users’ gender: women write longer messages and insert more smileys, while men are more reticent: usually they write short and simple information without any additional elements.

As far as the language register is concerned, the colloquial language is dominant in digilect as usually it imitates spoken language. As a matter of fact, in Finland the colloquial Finnish differs more and more from the standard (literary) Finnish. The use of the latter can seem even “comical” (cf. Luutonen 2008: 77). It is an interesting phenomenon, because the standard language seems pushed into the background of this specific colloquial language, or, at least its area decreases both in writing and oral form (cf. Hakulinen 2002). Already in 1976 linguists started a programme *Nyky-suomen puhekielen murros* (The turning point of Modern Finnish colloquial language) in order to study the spread and forms of the colloquial language (cf. Paunonen et al. 1976). Indeed, it is not possible to talk about Finnish digilect without Helsinki slang

<sup>54</sup> ICQ is the first stand-alone instant messenger and the first online instant messenger service that was developed and popularized by the Israeli company Mirabilis in November 1996. The name ICQ derives from the English phrase “I Seek You”.

<sup>55</sup> When using the 7-bit default alphabet within the 140 octets. However, alphabets having additional characters were compelled to use Unicode operating on a 16-bit default encoding, and such a message was limited to 70 characters. Furthermore, not only economic reasons played their role, but also technical possibilities: the first mobile phones with SMS functions allowed to send only 1 SMS at once. The famous Nokia 3310 was the first to let to write 3 concatenated messages at once (within 459 characters).

<sup>56</sup> Some linguists and teachers predicted that texting may lead writing skills to the erosion and harms, not only in orthography, but also grammar (because language structures in such electronic communication are often simplified and incorrect, without paying attention to linguistic standards). Also punctuation and word spacing is omitted very often, and usually upper case letters serve to indicate omitted spaces between words, or to be read like spelt by homophony, or to show shouting (if the whole word is written like this). However e.g. Crystal (2008) emphasizes ingeniousness of word-plays, and many researchers (e.g. Plester et al. 2008 & 2011) have already tested children’s skills and showed that there is no danger.

(*Stadin slang*) particularly, because it is a “language”, which became popular and universally used in Finland’s every-day life (cf. e.g. Paunonen 1995, Paunonen H. & M. 2005, Lappalainen 2001, Mantila 2004, Routarinne & Uusi-Hallila 2008). This slang also has become an inherent part of the Finnish digilect, as it is renowned for two fundamental properties that every digilect has: economy of form and playfulness. This first feature can be seen in words’ shortening in various ways, while the latter is detectable in alterations of words, not only in Finnish, but also borrowings, which are in abundance.

Finnish is a language written phonetically, so it has fewer possibilities to play with the conciseness in digilect (while English, thanks to its historical/etymological notation and abundance of homophones and homographs, has a wonderful richness in language games). However, Finnish has other means to express some contents in a short way and to play with words at once.

In Finnish, the choice of letters and numbers readable as words or piece of words is restricted, since homophony is quite low. We will only find:

- Phonetic equivalence of letters serves only to replace parts of words.<sup>57</sup> The letters used are only five: C, P, Q, X, Z. Four of them are uncommon in standard language: C, Q, X, Z.

- The letter C is read either in a Finnish way [se:] or in English [si:], e.g. *wic* = wissi (= vissi)<sup>58</sup> ‘sure, definite, certain’. Sometimes, this letter C is used playfully instead of writing K.

- The letter P is rare. It is read [pe:], e.g.: *cp* (< Eng. *cerebral palsy*) = *seepee* < *separi* ‘stupid; CP-handicapped’.

- The letter Q = [ku] has a larger number of examples and is used both in upper and in lower case (*Q/q*): *ihQ* = *ihku* < *ihka* < *ihana* ‘wonderful, gorgeous’; *ITQ* = *itku* ‘cry; what a pity!’, or in lower case form: *itq* = *itku* < *itkeä* ‘to cry’<sup>59</sup>; *mulq* = *mulkku* ‘cock, dick, prick, schlong (male genitalia); a contemptible person; asshole, dick, prick’; *niinQ* = *niin ku* < *niin kuin* ‘as (if/though)’; *nuQ* = *nuku* ‘sleep’, or in lower case form: *nuq* = *nuku* < *nukkua* ‘to sleep’; *QC* = *kusee* ‘things are cocking up’ < *kusta* ‘to piss; to fuck up’; *qma* = *kuuma* ‘hot’; *Qmis* = *kuumis* ‘hot’ (slang form). We can see that the equivalence of the length of the vowel and the consonant is only approximate, e.g. the letter Q can replace: *ku*, *kuu* ou *kk*.

<sup>57</sup> While in English they can replace whole words, e.g. *B* = *be*, *C* = *see*, *M* = *am*, *N* = *in* / *and* (both in slang pronunciation), *Q* = *queue*, *R* = *are* / *our*, *T* = *tea*, *U* = *you*, *Y* = *why*, *X* = *ex* / *kiss*. Or parts of the words (often approximately), e.g.: *CN* = *seeing*, *CT* = *city*, *IDL* = *ideal*, *NE* = *any*, *NJL* = *angel*, *NME* = *enemy*, *NRG* = *energy*, *Qt* = *cute*, *RLR* = *earlier*, *XLNt* = *excellent*, *Yl* = *while*, etc.

<sup>58</sup> In Finnish, there is no distinction between the letters V and W. The first letter is currently the most widespread, but the letter W had been used in ancient texts, probably under the influence of the German alphabet. Here, it appears only for decorative and playful reasons.

<sup>59</sup> The presence of the syllable [ku] and the letter Q in the word meaning ‘cry(ing)’ is exploited also in the doubling of this letter: *qq* / *QQ* = *itku* ‘cry(ing)’ – the form of the doubled letter Q shows the eyes filled with tears.



▪ The letter X is only used in lower case, in order of replace the consonantal pair *ks*: **kax** = *kaks* < *kaksi* ‘two’; **onx** = *onks* < *onko?* ‘is it/he/she?’; **textaa** = *tekstaa* ‘text message (verb in imperative mood), send text message’; **textari** = *tekstari* < *tekstiviesti* ‘text message’; **vähäx** = *vähäks* < *vähäksi* ‘for a little (bit)’.

▪ The letter Z = [ts], e.g. **zorba** = *tsorba* < Eng. *sorry*.

In principle, the use of those letters is not a novelty in the history of the Finnish language. Eloranta and Leino (2017: 234–235) remind that in the 16<sup>th</sup> c., Mikael Agricola, the “father” of the written Finnish, used C, Q, X, Z in his pioneer works in Finnish. Indeed, in his translation of the New Testament (1548), we can find a lot of examples: **yxi** = *yksi* ‘one’, **quin** = *kuin* ‘as; like; that’, **catzo** = *katso* ‘look’, etc.<sup>60</sup>

■ Phonetic equivalence of figures (numbers): the only forms of numbers useful in digilect come from slang abbreviations, and in fact, there are only three. They are used to replace pieces of words:<sup>61</sup>

▪ 5 = *viisi*, but in slang: *viis*, e.g.: **k5** [koviis] = *kovis* ‘tough guy, badass, heavy’ [slang form of *kova*(*naama*)] – although there is a difference of the vowel length;

▪ 8 = *kahdeksan*, but in slang: *kasi*, e.g.: **ma8** = *makasi* ‘he/she lay down’;

▪ 9 = *yhdeksän*, but in slang: *ysi*, e.g. **p9** [pysi] = *pussy* [pusi] ‘silly’.

Since the full form of figures (numbers) in standard Finnish is quite long, the slang has their abbreviated forms, and of course they are used in digilect too.

Besides, the figures are used to show numbers, even symbolically, e.g.: **247** = ‘24h, 7 days in week’.

■ Words’ shortening: (apocope and syncope are the most frequent)

▪ Apocope: **kans** = *kanssa* ‘with’; **-ki** = *-kin* ‘also, too’; **sit** = *sitten* ‘then; when (ever); ago’; **m / mo** = *moi* ‘hi’; **mull** = *mulla* < *minulla* ‘on/at me’; **mut** = *mutta* ‘but’; **olis** = *olisi* ‘would be’; **sull** = *sulla* < *sinulla* ‘on/at you’; **tääl** = *täällä* ‘here’; **teksti** = *tekstiviesti* ‘text message, SMS’; **terv** = *terveisin* ‘(with) greetings / regards’; **tod / TOD** = *todellakin!* ‘really!’; **virn** = *virnistys* ‘grin, smirk’. Also in slang words, e.g.: **bro** = *broidi* ‘brother’ (standard Fin. *veli*).

In **eijo** = *ei ole* ‘is not’, the *j* is added, as if it was phonetic writing.

Often in apocopate words, the final vowel becomes longer, and sometimes the notation of the length (doubling) doesn’t reduce the word’s volume, e.g.: **kaa** = *kanssa* ‘with’; **mo** = *moi* ‘hi’; **nee** = *neljä* ‘four’; **oo** = *ole!* ‘be!’; **paa** = *pane* ‘put!’; **tuu** = *tule* ‘come’. Also in slang words, e.g.: **morjee** = *morje(n)s* ‘hello’.

▪ Syncope: **ite** < *itse* ‘self’; **jtn / JTN** = *jotain* ‘something’; **ktn** = *ketään* ‘nobody’; **kts** = *kiitos* ‘thanks’; **mä** = *minä* ‘me’; **mee** = *mene* ‘go!’; **met** = *menet* ‘you go’; **mru** = *muru*

<sup>60</sup> However, in Agricola’s writings, Q occurs always with U, Z with T, and C appears mostly before the back vowels (A, O, U), but often interchanges with K, e.g. **coska** = *koska* ‘as, because’, **poica** = *poika* ‘boy’, etc.

<sup>61</sup> Compare English possibilities to replace (sometimes approximately) whole words: **2** = *to / too*, **4** = *for*, **6** = *sex*, **8** = *ate*; or to replace parts of words, e.g.: **1ce** = *once*, **1der** = *wonder*, **no1** = *no-one*, **2day** = *today*, **2morrow** = *tomorrow*, **ta2** = *tattoo*, **b4** = *before*, **4bid** = *forbid*, **4ever** = *forever*, **bay6** = *basics*, **4nic8** = *fornicate*, **complic8** = *complicate*, **cre8** = *create*, **d8** = *date*, **10der** = *tender*, **10sion** = *tension*, **of10** = *often*, **po10t** = *potent*, **10x** = *thanks*, **f9** = *fine*, **phy6** = *physics*, **sur5al** = *survival*, etc.

'honey (term of affection); crumb'; **mtn/MTN** = *mitään* 'nothing'; **mulla** = *minulla* 'on/at me'; **mullon** = *minulla on* 'I have'; **mun** = *minun* 'to me'; **musta** = *minusta* 'from me; in my opinion'; **mut** = *minut* 'me'; **nää** = *nämä* 'these'; **on** = *olen* 'I am'; **sä** = *sinä* 'you'; **son** = *se on* 'this is'; **sullon** = *sinulla on* 'you have', etc.

Often the internal vowel of the syncopated word is getting longer, e.g.: **nääs** = *näetkös* 'do you see'; **oon** = *olen* 'I am'; **oot** = *olet* 'you are'; **paan** = *panen* 'I put'; **sää** = *sinä* 'you'; **tuun** = *tulen* 'I'm coming'; **tuut** = *tulet* 'you're coming'.

■ Apheresis: **k/K** = *OK*; **tä** = *mitä?* 'what?'; **tos** = *kiitos* 'thanks'. In the example **koo** = *OK* – the letter K which remains is read in Finnish [ko:], however in this notation we have 3 letters instead of 2, which is not economic.

In general, in words' shortening, apocope and syncope are frequent, while apheresis occurs rarely.

■ Portmanteau words, e.g.: **käty** = *kämppä tyhjänä* 'place empty (vacant, free)'; **moon** = *minä olen* 'I am'; **okemo** = *okei, moi* 'OK, bye'; **otsä** = *oletko sinä* 'are you?'; **sitku** = *sitten kun* 'later when'; **tite** = *tietotekniikka* 'information technology'.<sup>62</sup> This type applies not only to expressions and phrases, but also sentences.

Sometimes a vowel becomes longer, e.g.: **näätsä** = *näetkö sinä* 'can you see?'; **ooksä** = *oletko sinä* 'are you?'; **oots** = *oletko sinä* 'are you?'; **ootsä** = *oletko sinä* 'are you?'; **soot** = *sinä olet* 'you are'.

■ Initialisms: in Finnish culture they are as common as elsewhere, also in standard language, even Urho Kaleva Kekkonen (famous and long-standing president of Finland 1956–1981) was called UKK. However in Finnish digilect, initialisms are not so popular, like in English or French language use, but one can find them:

■ Initialisms of composed words, e.g.: **kk** = *kuukausi* 'month' (< *kuu* 'moon' + *kausi* 'period'); **mp** = *mielipide* 'opinion' (< *mieli* 'sense, meaning' + *pide* < *pitää* 'to hold'); **uj** = *ulkojää* 'outdoor ice rink; bandy' (< *ulko* 'out-' + *jää* 'ice'); **vp** = *vapaapäivä* 'day off, holiday' (< *vapaa* 'free' + *päivä* 'day'). In Finnish, many words are composed, so this procedure allows to shorten them and decode them thanks to the context.

■ Initialisms of fixed phrases: **JJ** = *joo joo* 'yeah yeah'; **ms** = *mitä sitten* 'then what?'; **p.a. / peeaa** = *perse auki* 'broke' (literally 'arse open'); **tjsp** = *tai jotain sinne päin* 'or something like this'; **tms** = *tai muuta sellaista* 'or something like this', etc.

■ Initialisms of sentences: **EEK** = *eikö kukaan kuittaa?* 'does nobody acknowledge it?'; **emt/EMT** = *en mä tiedä* < *en minä tiedä* 'I don't know'; **EVG** = *etsi vittu Googlesta* 'damn it, search in Google'; **EMV** = *ei voi muistaa* 'impossible to remember'; **EVT** = *ei voi tietää* 'nobody knows'; **hv** = *haista vittu* 'fuck you'; **JSSAP** = *jätä se sika, ansaitset parempaa* 'leave this pig, you merit someone better'; **KVG** = *katso vittu Googlesta* 'damn it, look into Google'; **mrsnaji** = *minä rakastan sinua nyt aina ja ikuisesti* 'I love you now always and forever'; **TJEU** = *tsekkaa jos et usko* 'check if you don't believe'; **TKH** = *turpa kii(nni), huora* 'shut up your face, bitch'; **tm** = *tai muuta* 'or else'; **VTH** = *vie terveisiä helvettiin* 'bring away greetings to hell', etc.

<sup>62</sup> This type is used in standard language too, e.g. *sote* = *sosiaalinen terveys* 'social health' or *sosiaali- ja terveyshuolto* 'social and health services'; or *Kotus* = *Kotimaisten kielten tutkimuskeskus* 'Institute for the languages of Finland'; or *Kela* = *Kansaneläkelaitos* 'Social Insurance Institution', but this last example could be classified also as an acronym.

▪ Acronyms are rare and they serve only to replace some sentences too: **ETYK** = *en tule yöksi kotiin* 'I don't come back home this night'; **EVO** = *et vain osaa* 'you just don't know'; **PoK** = *paina opintoja kunnolla* 'manage your studies properly!'; **P.O.S.** = *poliisi on sika* 'police is swine'; **VOOP** = *vittu, onneksi on perjantai* 'damn it, luckily it's Friday'; **vot** = *vittu, olet tyhmä* 'fuck / damn it, you are stupid', etc.

Some of them are calques of English sentences, e.g.: **EVTEK** = *ei voi tietää, eikä kiinnostaa* 'nobody knows and nobody cares' (Engl. *DKDC* = *[I] don't know, [I] don't care*); **EVVK** = *ei voisi vähempää kiinnostaa* 'I couldn't care less' (Eng. *ICCL*). However, we have to note that initialisms are rather rare in Finnish digilect.

■ Onomatopoeias: some of them became popular, but their contribution to the transmission of information can be ambiguous: **ääh** 'argh!; yuck!'; **au/auts** 'ouch!'; **mjeh / mm** 'confirmation'; **oo-ih** 'oh!'; **piip** 'beep; meep'; **uuih** 'oh; ouch!'; **vips** 'sure'; **yyt** 'out!'. Some of them are borrowed from other languages: **daa** 'yeah, yep' (< Russian); **vau/wow** (< English).

There is also a verbal form, which looks like an onomatopoeia: **reps** < shortening of a verbal form in Imperfect: *repesin* 'I burst with laughter', of the infinitive *revetä* 'to burst out laughing'.

Let's also note two examples: **JA** = *ha* and **jaja** = *haha* 'hihi', where the notation is Spanish-like (letter *j* as [h]). This is probably motivated by playfulness. Let's notice the first example is written in capital letters so as not to confuse it with the word *ja* 'and' in Finnish.

Finally, we should mention the letter **ü** – a mini smiley (eyes and lips parted in a smile), very popular in Finland, especially in upper case: **Ü**.

■ Combinations of 2 procedures:

▪ Apocope with resuffixation (slang suffixoid): **mosa** = *moottori* 'motor; engine'; **poke/pokemon/porkkis** = *porno*; **samis** = *samanlainen* 'similar, of a kind'; **sisko/siskis/sisse/sisuri** 'sis' = *sisar* 'sister'; **takas** = *takaisin* 'back'; **terkut** = *terveiset* 'greetings, regards'; **terse/terskis** = *tervel* 'hi!'; **tiäs** = *tietysti/tietenkin/tietenkään* 'of course, naturally'; **tietsa** = *tietokone* 'computer'; **tilsu** = *tilanne* 'situation'; **ysi** = *yhdeksän* '9', etc.

In this type we can also locate the replacement of the interrogative suffix *-ko/-kö* by slang suffixoids **-ks** and **-s**, e.g.: **onks** = *onko?* 'is he/she?'.

▪ Some words have the form of words that exist in standard Finnish: **tabu** = *tabletti* 'tablet' (in standard Fin.: *tabu* 'taboo'); **termos** = *tervel* 'hi!' (in standard Fin.: *termos(pullo)* 'thermos'); **visa** = *viides* 'fifth' (in standard Fin.: *visa* 'decorative birch wood, in which the fibres are twisted; quiz'), etc.<sup>63</sup>

▪ Syncope + resuffixation: **muo** = *minua* 'from/of me'; **oks** = *onko?* 'is he/she?'; **tiäts** = *tiedätkö?* 'do you know?', etc.

▪ Syncope + apocope: **emt/EMT** = *ei mitään* 'nothing'; **hme** = *huomenna* 'tomorrow'; **mtm?** = *mitä(s) minä?* 'and me?'; **mts?** = *mitä(s) sinä?* 'and you?'; **mtt?** = *mitä teet?* 'what are you doing?'; **ois** < *olisi* 'would be'; **ooks?** = *oletko sinä?* 'are you?'; **pv** = *päivä* 'day'; **sull** = *sinulla* 'you have; at you'; **tnä** = *tänään* 'today'; **vp** = *vapaa*

<sup>63</sup> Also in examples above we have seen a similar phenomenon: **sää** < *sinä* 'you' (while in standard Finnish *sää* 'weather'), or **on** < *olen* 'I am' (while in standard Finnish *on* 'is'). Of course, one can decode these words only thanks to the conversation context.

‘free’; **vrn** = *varmaan* ‘for sure’; **vrt** = *varattu* ‘occupied; busy’, etc. In the majority of cases, the consonantal “framework” remains, while the vowels disappear. However, the remaining vowels can lengthen, e.g.: **menoo** = *minä en ole* ‘I am not’; **tuuts** = *tuletko sinä?* ‘are you coming?’. This method has been popular for a long time also in standard language, e.g.: **vk** = *viikonloppu* ‘weekend’, etc.

- Phonetic modification + resuffixation: **tieräks** = *tiedätkö?* ‘do you know?’.
- Metathesis + apocope: **pron** = *porno*.
- Combination of 3 procedures:
  - Syncope + apocope + resuffixation: **eks** = *etkö(s)* ‘are you not?’ / *eikö niin/totta* ‘isn’t it?’.
  - Letter + number + suffix: **c8** = *sekaisin* ‘in disorder/confusion; confused’ < *C* [se:] + *8* [kasi] + *-n*.

It is clear that the combination of 3 procedures is rare. It can be seen that the composite messages in the Finnish digilect are not long-standing as often happens in English and French. In most cases, Finns use simple types. This can confirm their taste for the classical simplicity of which they are known in the field of design and styling of various types.

Altogether we can note distinctive features of the Finnish digilect:

- clipping: syncope (medial clipping) is the most frequent; apocope (final clipping) also occurs quite often; however, historically the shortening is not a preferred procedure in the Finnish language, which prefers add (especially in paragoge) than truncate, and this tendency is visible in digilect too,
- resuffixation – usually with slang suffixoids,
- use of simple alterations: hybridization is rare,
- increasingly common use of slang.

### English influences in Finnish digilect

Since the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> c., English language influences dominate in Finland, which is not surprising as this language has already become an international “super-language” for communication on a global scale. Alongside the ways of its transmission by Anglo-American popular culture and the development of new technologies including IT and computer science, English has gained its prominent place in Finnish society through a broad education at schools but also a well salutary habit in the media: Finnish television broadcasts films in original versions with subtitles, etc. Nowadays, Finns use English willingly, and the Finnish youth language, especially slang, has a strong influence from English. The English language is even considered as a “third” language of the state (the second is Swedish) (cf. Leppänen et al. 2008). This is also visible very well, among others, in their digilect.

Here we quote some “Anglicisms” found in Finnish repertoires, to prove that the influence of English is very strong. And we will try to classify them.

▪ Direct borrowings: their form and meaning did not change, e.g.: *nice*, *to fail*, *to fuck*, *nick* (< *nickname*), *shit*, *newbie* (written also *noob*, *nub*, *n00b*) ‘new user/participant in an Internet activity’, etc. The same occurs with many initialisms and acronyms that became popular in English digilect, e.g.: *LOL* (*laugh(ing) out loud*, or rarely: *Lots of love*), *ASAP* (*as soon as possible*), *ILY* (*I love you*), *IMHO* (*in my humble opinion*), *OMG* (*Oh my God*), *YOLO* (*you only live once*), *BRB* (*be right back*), *gl* (*good luck*), etc., or abbreviations, e.g.: *thnx* (*thanks*), *sry* (*sorry*), *anon* (*anonymous*), etc.

The English borrowings that we will observe below are, in most cases, used in the Finnish slang and not in the standard language:

▪ English loanwords adapted phonetically and graphically: *all right/alright* > *ool-rait/oorait*, *band* > *pandi*; *chat* > *chatti/tšatti/tšätti/tsätti*, *file* > *faili*; *happy* > *häpi*; *hi* > *hai*; *newbie* > *nyyppä*; *of course* > *ofkoos*; *oh really?* > *ourili?*; *okey-dokey* > *oukkidoukki*; *place* > *pleisi/pleissi*; *plan* > *plän*; *playback* > *pleibäk*; *playboy* > *plei-poi*; *please* > *pliis*; *seat* > *sitsi*; *shit* > *shiit/šiiit*; *shitty* > *shiti/šiti*; *shut up* > *sädap*; *sorry* > *sori/tsori/zori*; *spam* > *späm/spammil/spämmi*; *teacher* > *tiitseri/teetsöri*; *teacher’s pet* > *tiitsööspet*; *thanks* > *thänks/tänks*; *thank you* > *tängjuu*; *Tweet/Twitter* > *Twiiitti*; *yeah* > *jee*; *yes* > *jes*, etc. This procedure is quite frequent as it is economic: it simplifies the English notation and reveal phonetic writing. In many cases, these borrowings have a shorter form than their Finnish equivalents (e.g. Eng. *file* = Fin. *tietokoneen tiedosto*). Moreover, they bring a playful shade in the communication.

▪ Loanwords written phonetically, but in a longer more expressive form in a playing function: *free* > *frii*; *OK* > *ookoo/ookk*<sup>64</sup>/*oke/oge/okei/oukei*<sup>65</sup>; *TV* > *teevee*; *yes* > *jees/jeez/jess*. The construction of the borrowed word may contain other elements to play with the form, e.g.: *all right/alright* > *oolsprait* (with the name of the soft drink “Sprite”). This type, which imitates the oral realization playfully, is not frequent in digilect as it is not economical. It may appear in chats but rarely in texting.

▪ Anglicisms adapted phonetically and graphically but also grammatically, because the endings facilitate the inflection, e.g.: *to ban* > *bännätä/bannata* ‘to interdict the entry to a chat room/forum’; *disc-jockey* > *tiskijukka*; *to fail* > *feilata*; *to flood* > *floodata* ‘to repeat the same messages or comments, to paste the same text many times to a chat’ / *floodaaja* ‘a person who floods message boxes or chat rooms with unwanted or repetitive comments’; *to google* > *googlata*; *idle* > *idlaaja* ‘a passive and not engaged participant of Internet conversations (in chat rooms or Messenger)’ / *idlata* ‘to participate passively in Internet conversations (e.g. in chat rooms or Messenger)’; *IRC (Internet Relay Chat)* > *irkata* ‘to chat on IRC’ / *irccaaja/irkkaaja* ‘IRC user’; *lag* > *laggaus* ‘delay/latency in data transmission/transfer’ / *lagaa/lagittaa* ‘to retard/decelerate data transmission/transfer’; *to own*<sup>66</sup> ‘to defeat, dominate, or be above’ > *ownata/ounata*; *to mail* > *meilata*; *shitty* > *shitinen/šitinen*; *to spam* > *späm-mätä*; *to spoil* > *spoilaa/spoilata*; *to stalk* > *stalkata*; *to surf* > *surffaa/surffata*; *Tweet/Twitter* > *twitata* ‘to send messages on Twitter, to post an update on Twitter’. Note

<sup>64</sup> Long vowel, imitation of the Finnish pronunciation.

<sup>65</sup> English pronunciation this time.

<sup>66</sup> Also written *pwn* in the so-called “leetspeak” (a kind of Internet slang).

that many English words are short (almost all are monosyllabic here), so it is easier to endow them with endings. Of course, this procedure lengthens the Finnish words but they are better assimilated and, by their English root, they become more playful. Moreover, often their Finnish equivalents have a much longer form (e.g. *to mail* = Fin. *lähettää sähköpostiviestejä*) or there is not a single Finnish word for these phenomena (e.g. *to ban*, *to flood*, *idle*), so, in sum, it is more useful to use loans, if only in electronic communication.

- Apocope: *different* > **diffē**, *gallery* (*IRC*) > *irc-galleria* > **galle** / **galee**, (*web messenger*) > **mese**<sup>67</sup> / **messeng**. This is a rare but very interesting phenomenon, as, in general, Finnish prefers to add elements to borrowings instead of simplifying and abridging them.

- Suffixation (mostly with slang suffixoids) or resuffixation after shortening, e.g.: *ban* > **banaani** / **banni** 'entry ban (in chat room/forum)'; *best friend* > **besu**, *diskette* > *disketti* > **disu**, *face* > **feisi** / **feici**, *FAQ* (*frequently asked question*) > **fakki**, *feeling* > **feelis** / **fiilis**, *foot* > **futi** / **futu**, *football* > **futis**, *friend* > **frendi** / **frendu** / **frende** / **frena** / **freba**, *gallery* (*IRC*) > **galtsu**, *good* > **gutte** / **gutis**, *good night* > **guti nati**, *IRC* (*Internet Relay Chat*) > **Irkki** 'chat' / **irkkari** 'chat user'; *off-road* > **offari**; *OK* > **okka** / **okke** / **okeido**, *playboy* > **plebari**, *Play Station* > **Playkkari**, *shit* > **shitta** / **šitta** / **shimandu**, *special* > **spessu**, ang. *single* > **sinkku**, *sorry* > **tsorba**, *teacher* > **teitsö**, *thanks* > **tänki** / **tänket**, *yes/yeah* > **jeh** / **jehla** / **jehmais** / **jehna**, etc. This type is quite common despite the fact that it extends the volume of the message. There is also a strong phonetic adaptation of the words.

- Finnish-English blends in constructions with the verb *olla* 'to be': **olla in** < *to be in*; **olla (ihan) in love** < *to be (totally) in love*; **olla off-game** / **ofgeim** < *to be off game*; **olla out** < *to be out*.

Young Finns, whose the English language skills are often perfect, have sometimes tendency to mixt both languages (also in spoken language). Thus we observe a frequent use of Anglicisms (English words, assimilated loan-words, and Finnish-English blends) and of the English digilect (mostly its initialisms and acronyms).

Also in everyday speech, young Finns use English digilectal abbreviations, e.g. *tule tänne ASAP* 'come here ASAP'. Indeed, the most popular are two acronyms: ASAP and LOL (primarily *laughing out loud*, but also *lots of love*).

### An example of a Finnish practical application of the digilect

Text messages are not only an ordinary way of communicating, but also they can be used as a code among people who want to keep their discretion

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<sup>67</sup> This form is well adopted and then used to create derivatives: **mesettää** 'to use the messenger', **mesettäminen** 'the use of the messenger', **olla mesessä** 'to be on the messenger'. Thus the abbreviated form undergoes the procedures described above. It should be noted that the truncated word *mese* may also be the same as from the name of the Mercedes car brand.

and/or silence, e.g. on the website of the circle of birdwatchers (*Lintutiedotus* in *Bongariliitto Ry*<sup>68</sup>) we can find a text code that can be useful when observing birds to alert companions and teach them interesting finds. The recommended signs are simple abbreviations, e.g.:

- initial letters of simple truncated words: **ä** = *ääntelevä* (*ei laulava*) ‘making sounds / babbling (not singing)’; **m** = *muuttava* ‘changing, moving’; **p** = *paikallinen* ‘local’; **r** = *rengastettu* ‘ringed’.
- combinations of initial letters of truncated words and numbers: **n5** = *noin viisi* ‘about five’; **1k3n** = *1 koiras ja 3 naarasta* ‘1 male and 3 females’.
- apocope: **ed** = *edelleen* ‘still; further; onwards’; **ed p** = *edelleen paikalla* ‘still in attendance / present’; **rist** = *risteys* ‘intersection, crossing’; **kiert** = *kiertelevä* (*liikkuu ympäriinsä ilman selvää suuntaa*) ‘nomadic (it moves around without a clear direction)’; **kaart** = *kaarteleva* (*esim. korkeutta ottava petolintu*) ‘wheeling (e.g. rising bird of prey)’; **oik** = *oikea* ‘right’; **suor** = *suoraan* ‘straight’; **vas** = *vasen* ‘left’.
- syncope + apocope: **kn** = *käänny* ‘turn’.
- initial letters of the compound words: **1kv** = *1. (kuluva) kalenterivuoden lintu* ‘bird of the current calendar year’; **2kv** = *2. (edellisen) kalenterivuoden lintu (jne.)* ‘bird of the previous calendar year (etc.)’; **ht** = *hiekkatie* ‘sand road’; **jp** = *juhlapukuinen* ‘in full/gala dress’ (in rut season); **kp** = *kaatopaikka* ‘dumping place’; **pp** = *parkkipaikka* ‘parking lot/space’; **th** = *tienhaara* ‘crossroads’; **tp** = *talvipukuinen* ‘in winter coat’; **vp** = *vaihtopukuinen* ‘in changing/moulting coat’.
- conventional graphic sign (without graphic link with a word): “ ‘full-grown’ (optional sign); ‘young’, **1/3** ‘1 male and 3 females’ (optional symbol); **a5** ‘flight/rise of five’; **Ä** ‘singing’ (letter *Ä* refers to the Finnish word *ääni* ‘sound, voice’).
- “Anglicisms” are also used: **N, E, S, W** < *North, East, South, West*; **ad** < *adult*; **imm** < *immature*; **juv** < *juvenile*; **pull** < *pullet*; **subad** < *subadult*.

This is just a set of internal rules within a circle of ornithology enthusiasts whose communication needs are not very complicated. That is why their key code is quite simple. One cannot even observe here any word-formation. But this is an excellent example of a practical use of digilect in fast and discreet communication. It is also an excellent example of a Finnish practical flair.

In this short article, we wanted to show a few ICT innovations from Finland, which reflect the Finnish culture of creativity and functionalism, but also they are a result of a unique Finnish strategy of systematic investments in technological research as well as a public education system.

We also wanted to show some examples of the Finnish “media culture”, particularly “mobile (pop)culture”<sup>69</sup> in electronic media communication: the first national emojis as well as the Finnish digilect, which is a kind of code

<sup>68</sup> See: <http://www.santamargarita.fi/lintutiedotus/textsh1.asp> (access in summer 2014 and fall 2017 – between both access dates this code did not change, so it is continuously useful).

<sup>69</sup> Let’s also note that since 2000, the *Mobile Phone Throwing World Championships* have been held annually just in Finland.

language of younger generations, although probably in the near future the multimedia messages will reduce text contents to the minimum in favour of images. However, so far the users of the electronic communication tools merely write their messages, or play with the text. Moreover, smartphones made possible phone connections via Internet, so the use of the SMS has decreased. Despite this, SMS communication is still popular, even if similar forms of communication are available on Internet instant messengers (e.g. WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, iMessage, Skype) without any limits of characters, but shortness and language economy are still appreciated, and so are playful elements and pictographic writing.

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### Abstract

ICT innovations from Finland, and Finnish digilect in electronic media culture

The article deals with ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) innovations that were entirely or partially invented in Finland (Nokia mobile phone technology, IRC, Linux, input to invent SMS). In the paper we discuss the current electronic communication that developed media culture and new codes, which combine pictorial and language elements: emoticons and emojis as well as texting. Finland is the first country in the world to create its own national emojis (63 so far). Finally, we show characteristics of the Finnish texting, i.e. “cyberslang” (mainly in younger people’s communication), in other words “digilect” called after publications by a Hungarian linguist Ágnes Veszelszki.